

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INR-07

CIAE-00 INRE-00 CCO-00 /036 W
----- 034419

O 211627Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2177

S E C R E T ACCRA 2971

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.) OTRA XA

SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC COMMENTS ON ACHEAMPONG

REF: STATE 95877

1. FOLLOWING KEYED TO POINTS IN PARAGRAPH TWO, REFTEL.

A. WHILE PRECISE REASONS FOR REORGANIZATION OF GOG LAST OCTOBER REMAIN SUBJECT OF SPECULATION, IT SEEMS CLEAR NOW THAT ACHEAMPONG EMERGED AT LEAST AS STRONG AS HE WAS BEFORE AND THAT HE IS, WITHOUT SERIOUS CHALLENGE, TOP MAN IN GOVERNMENT. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED PERSONAL STRENGTH IN EXTERNAL FIELD, NOTABLY IN HIS RECOGNITION OF MPLA AGAINST APPARENT ADVICE OF COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN MINISTRY. HIS MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS HAS BEEN MUCH LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL BUT IN PUBLIC EYES THIS SEEMS NOT TO REDOUND TO HIS DISCREDIT. HIS LEADERSHIP APPEARS TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE BULK OF GHANAIS (MANY OF WHOM FEAR RETURN TO PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM). IN AFRICA, ACHEAMPONG TENDS TO BE LESS KNOWN PERSONALLY TO OTHER LEADERS AS A RESULT OF HIS SELF-IMPOSED REFUSAL TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE GHANA. HE HAS RECEIVED A NUMBER OF HEADS OF STATE AND LEADERS OF LIBERATION MOVEMENTS HERE, BUT ACHEAMPONG DOES NOT HOLD THE POSITION OF PROMINENCE WITHIN AFRICA THAT WAS NKRUMAH'S.

B. PHYSICALLY THE HEAD OF STATE IS SHORT AND SOLID, SOMEWHAT PLEASED WITH HIS MILITARY BEARING. HE HAS NEVER BEEN ACCUSED OF BRILLIANCE EITHER IN ACTION OR CONVERSATION BUT HAS BEEN

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KNOWN TO FOCUS ON A PARTICULAR SUBJECT AND EXPOUND HIS (AND

GHANA'S) VIEWS WITH STRENGTH. WE CAN EXPECT THIS IN REGARD TO SOUTHERN AFRICA DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT. HE PREFERS EITHER/ OR OPTIONS AND, IN KEEPING WITH STEREOTYPE MILITARY MEN, OFTEN MISSES THE GRAY AREAS. HE IS REPUTED TO DRINK WELL AND TO HOLD HIS CONSUMPTION LESS WELL.

C. ACHEAMPONG PERSONALIZED GHANA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THAT HE IS A GHANAIAN FIRST AND AN AFRICAN NEXT AND LAST. HIS VIEWS ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS THUS TEND TO BE SET BY HIS ESTIMATION OF WHAT ANOTHER COUNTRY CAN DO FOR GHANA AND FOR AFRICAN LIBERATION. HE DID NOT OPPOSE CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA OR SOVIET ASSISTANCE AS HE WAS CONCERNED WITH THE END AND NOT THE MEANS ONCE HE COMMITTED GHANA TO SUPPORT OF THE MPLA. AS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS, HOWEVER, HE APPEARS TO BE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO "SOCIALISM" IN THE SOVIET SENSE AND FAVORS A MIXED ECONOMY IN WHICH PRIVATE CAPITAL HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY. HE HAS ASSURED AMBASSADOR MANY TIMES THAT "GHANA WILL NEVER GO COMMUNIST". HIS VIEWS OF THE UK ARE MIXED AND COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL TIES WITH BRITAIN ARE NOT AS CLOSE AS, SAY, MANY FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES' TIES WITH FRANCE. HIS QUITE FAVORABLE IMAGE OF THE US WAS GAINED DURING HIS TRAINING AT FORT LEAVENWORTH. THIS PERSONAL VIEW, HOWEVER, CANNOT BE TURNED INTO POLITICAL SUPPORT IF HE SEES US POLICY RUNNING CONTRARY TO HIS CONCEPTS ON GHANA AND AFRICA.

D. ACHEAMPONG IS STRAIGHT FORWARD IN HIS DEALINGS. HE LACKS THE INTELLECTUAL EQUIPMENT TO BE DISINGENUOUS AND HE IS CERTAINLY NOT SHY. AS NOTED ABOVE HE PREFERS ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED ON A TWO OPTION BASIS. HE IS FROM TIME TO TIME GIVEN TO SNAP DECISIONS, HTS WE BELIEVE WAS THE CASE WITH THE RECOGNITION OF THE MPLA. HE SPEAKS IN A STRONG VOICE AND WITH CONVICTION. HE LIKES QUOTATIONS AND HUMOROUS STORIES. HE ADMIRES PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD TO WORK THEIR WAY UP THE LADDER, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO HAVE COME FROM THE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS. HE SMOKES A GREAT DEAL AND HAS A HABIT (WHEN SEATED) OF RAPIDLY SWINGING HIS RIGHT LEG WHEN NERVOUS OR IRRITATED.

2. ONE BIT OF MISCELLANEOUS DATA MIGHT BE ADDED: ON APRIL 16, HE TOLD THE LOCAL CHAPTER THAT HE HAD BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROSICRUCIANS FOR "A NUMBER OF YEARS". HENCE, THIS
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CAN BE ADDED TO ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND JUJU AMONG HIS RELIGIOUS PREFERENCES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, PRESIDENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ACCRA02971
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760151-0403
From: ACCRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760441/aaaabilb.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 95877
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUN 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <13 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BIOGRAPHIC COMMENTS ON ACHEAMPONG
TAGS: OVIP, OTRA, PINR, PGOV, XA, GH, (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (ACHEAMPONG, IGNATIUS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006